

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 11952

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNGA SHUM PFOR VE
SUBJ: VENEZUELAS VOTE ON THE ANTI-ZIONISM RESOLUTION

REF: A. CARACAS 11636; B. CARACAS 11593; C. USUN 5842

1. WE HAVE DONE SOME CHECKING ON THE GOV'S SWITCHING OF
SIGNALS WITH RESPECT TO THE VOTE TO DEFER THE ANTI-ZIONISM
RESOLUTION IN THE UNGA. WE THINK TWO INTERRELATED FACTORS WERE
AT PLAY IN THAT UNFORTUNATE FAILURE TO CARRY OUT THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S

WORD: (A) THE PRECOMINANT INFLUENCE MINISTER OF STATE MANUEL
PEREZ GUERRERO EXERCISES OVER CRITICAL AREAS OF VENEZUELAN
FOREIGN POLICY, AND (B) THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S LOW STATE OF PRESTIGE
AND SLOPPY MANAGEMENT.

2. ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 11, BEFORE WE HAD RECEIVED
REFTEL (C), THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR ASKED THE MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR
OF INTERNATIONAL POLICY, AMBASSADOR DIAZ-GONZALEZ, ABOUT
VENEZUELA'S VOTE ON THE ISSUE. DIAZ-GONZALEZ SAID THAT THE
GOV HAD ABSTAINED ON THE RESOLUTION ITSELF, BUT, REVEALING HOW
OUT OF TOUCH HE WAS, INSISTED THAT THE PROPOSAL TO DEFER HAD NOT
COME TO A VOTE. HE DID MENTION RATHER POINTEDLY THAT PEREZ
GUERRERO HAD BEEN IN NEW YORK OVER THE WEEKEND AND HINTED
THAT THE LATTER MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED AMBASSADOR CONSALVI'S
ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RESOLUTION. OBVIOUSLY IN CONSIDERABLE
EMBARRASSMENT, DIAZ GONALEZ HAS TWICE SINCE EVADED ANY
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DISCUSSION OF THE MATTER WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR. TWO

MEMBERS OF PEREZ GUERRERO'S STAFF ALSO DODGED THE SUBJECT IN TALKING WITH THE COUNSELOR, BUT EVIDENCED A FAR MORE DETAILED KNOWLEDGE THAN WOULD BE EXPECTED OF MIDDLE-GRADE FUNCTIONARIES IN AN OFFICE OSTENSIBLY UNCONCERNED WITH THIS KIND OF POLITICAL ISSUE.

3. A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HERE WHO HAS CLOSE PERSONAL TIES TO THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE AMBASSADOR FLATLY THAT PEREZ GUERRERO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOV POSITION ON THE ANTI-ZIONIST RESOLUTION. HE SAID HE KNEW OF AT LEAST ONE PREVIOUS OCCASION IN WHICH PEREZ GUERRERO HAD MANAGED A LAST-MINUTE SWITCH IN A VENEZUELAN VOTE AT THE UN BY TELLING CONSALVI TO INTERPRET HIS INSTRUCTIONS IN THE MOST LIBERAL POSSIBLE FASHION. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, IT IS NOT THAT PEREZ GUERRERO "DEFIES" THE PRESIDENT OR DIRECTLY COUNTERMANDS THE FOREIGN MINISTRY; ONLY THAT HE HAS SUCH AUTHORITY (AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY SO LITTLE) AS TO BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE AND SHADE GOV INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS ENDS. THE SOURCE COMMENTED THAT ROMULO BETANCOURT IS THE ONLY "CHIEF" PEREZ GUERRERO TRULY RECOGNIZES.

4. WE SURMISE THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER GENUINELY BELIEVED THAT VENEZUELA WOULD VOTE FOR DEFERRAL, BUT THAT HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE LOOSE, PROBABLY CONTAINING LATITUDE TO ABSTAIN IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATED SUCH A COURSE. IT ALSO SEEMS REASONABLE THAT PEREZ GUERRERO, THE GUARDIAN OF THIRD-WORLD AND OPEC SOLIDARITY, OPPOSED GOING BEYOND ABSTENTION ON ANY FACET OF THIS ISSUE. KNOWING WHO COUNTS, CONSALVI COULD BE EXPECTED TO ACT ACCORDINGLY.
SHLAUDEMAN

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